The Grammatical Categories

of Nouns & Verbs

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The Grammatical Categories of Nouns

1. **Number**: The grammatical category distinguishing between singular and plural. In many languages, verb forms show agreement (concord) with number and person of the subject.

2. **Person**: Most languages, including English, distinguish three 'persons': First person, used by a speaker to refer to himself (e.g., I, we); Second person, to refer to the addressee (e.g., you); and Third person, to refer to people or things other than the speaker or addressee (e.g., he, she, it, they).

3. **Gender**: Grammatical gender does not play an important role in English grammar although pronominal (of pronouns) distinctions are made, usually on the basis of natural gender between 'he, she, and it'. The traditional names of grammatical genders are: masculine, feminine and neuter (not found in English). In many languages (also English), grammatical gender (represented in the use of pronouns in English) does not often coincide with natural gender (a biological rather than a linguistic classification), e.g., a car, ship, or airplane may be referred to as 'she', a baby may be referred to as 'it'. Natural gender occasionally plays a role in the form of nouns, e.g., 'actor, actress' but many can apply to both sexes, e.g., 'doctor'.

4. **Case**: It is a grammatical category of nouns indicating its relationship to other words in a sentence. In modern English, only one case is inflectionally marked in nouns, i.e., the possessive, e.g., The man's book. Pronouns have more forms which could be described as 'subjective' and 'objective' and two possessive forms, e.g., (I, me, my, mine) Subj. Obj. Possessive.

The Grammatical Categories of Verbs

1. **Tense**: It refers primarily to the way the grammar marks the time at which the action denoted by the verb took place. In English, we can distinguish two basic tenses 'past' and 'present' and several ways of indicating the future.

2. **Aspect**: It refers primarily to the way the grammar marks the duration or type of temporal activity denoted by the verb. In English, we have two aspects:

   a) Perfective, referring to the completion of an action and
   b) Progressive, indicating the duration and continuity of action rather than completion. She has written a letter to Huda. (Completion of activity) Compare She is writing a letter to Huda. (Continuity of activity)

3. **Voice**: It is a category used in the grammatical description of sentence or clause structure, primarily with reference to verbs, to express the way sentences may alter the relationship between the subject and object of a verb without changing the meaning of the sentence. The main distinction is between 'active' and 'passive'.
   - The dog bites the cat. (Active) Compare
   - The cat was bitten by the dog. (Passive)

4. **Mood**: It is a term used in the theoretical and descriptive study of sentence type, and especially of the verbs they contain. Mood refers to a set of syntactic and semantic contrasts signaled by alternative verb forms, e.g., Indicative Vs. Subjective and Imperative (Ali is clever, If I were a king, Go home) successively. Semantically, a wide range of meaning is involved

especially indicating the speaker's attitude to what he is saying, e.g., 'uncertainly', 'possibility', 'obligation', etc. English mainly uses 'model' auxiliaries to indicate such moods.